

# The relationship between components of love (Intimacy, Passion, Commitment) and marital satisfaction in married women as a function of length of marriage

Nikita  
*Shobhit University*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a formal relationship acknowledged by law and society, in which two people agree to live together and support one another. It usually includes legal duties and rights and may be celebrated through various traditions or ceremonies. This union often lays the foundation for building a family. Marriage is a legally and socially recognized union between two individuals who commit to sharing their lives emotionally, financially, and, often, physically. It serves as a foundational institution in most societies, providing structure for family life, social stability, and the legal rights of spouses and children. Legally, marriage grants partners various rights and responsibilities, such as inheritance, property ownership, tax benefits, and the ability to make decisions on behalf of one another in medical or legal matters. Beyond its legal framework, marriage holds deep cultural and religious significance. It is frequently seen as a sacred bond and a rite of passage, with customs and ceremonies varying widely across cultures and religions. Socially, marriage represents companionship, mutual support, and the shared responsibility of raising a family. In contemporary society, the concept of marriage has evolved to include a broader range of partnerships, including same-sex marriages and non-traditional unions. This evolution reflects changing societal values, such as gender equality, individual autonomy, and the prioritization of emotional compatibility over traditional roles. Despite these changes, marriage remains a central element of human society, adapting over time while continuing to influence personal relationships and social organization.

Marital satisfaction refers to the subjective sense of happiness, contentment, and fulfillment one experiences within a marriage. It is an emotional and psychological state that reflects how individuals perceive their relationship with their spouse, including their level of affection, communication, support, and overall happiness within the partnership. Marital satisfaction is a crucial component of marital stability and individual well-being. It has been shown that couples with higher levels of marital satisfaction tend to experience better mental health, physical health, and greater life satisfaction (Huston & Caughlin, 2001).

There are various factors that affect the level of marital satisfaction, such as:

1. **Effective communication:** It is one of the most significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Couples who communicate openly and honestly are more likely to express their needs, resolve conflicts constructively, and feel emotionally connected. Poor communication, on the other hand, is linked to misunderstandings, unresolved conflicts, and emotional distance, which can reduce marital satisfaction.
2. **Conflict Resolution:** How couples manage and resolve conflicts can deeply impact their satisfaction. Couples who engage in negative conflict styles, such as hostility or avoidance, may experience lower marital satisfaction. In contrast, those who can resolve conflicts in a calm, respectful manner tend to report higher levels of happiness in their marriages.
3. **Shared Values and Goals:** Couples who share similar values, goals, and life plans often report higher marital satisfaction. Alignment on fundamental issues like parenting, religion, and

financial management can contribute to harmony and prevent dissatisfaction

4. Intimacy: It refers to the emotional closeness, trust, openness, and sense of connectedness between partners. This emotional bond fosters mutual understanding, vulnerability, and a strong sense of partnership, all of which are critical for marital satisfaction. When spouses feel emotionally supported and understood, they are more likely to experience feelings of safety, acceptance, and belonging within the relationship. These qualities promote long-term satisfaction and stability in marriage. Furthermore, high levels of intimacy encourage effective communication and empathy, which help couples navigate conflicts more constructively. As a result, intimacy functions as a foundation that strengthens both emotional well-being and relational harmony, ultimately leading to greater satisfaction in marital life.

A study by Hefazi Torqabeh et al. (2006) involving 123 married individuals found that all three components of love were significantly related to marital satisfaction, with intimacy emerging as the strongest predictor.

5. Passion: It encompasses physical attraction, sexual desire, and romantic excitement. Within the framework of marriage, passion plays a vital role in fostering emotional and physical closeness between partners. The presence of passion enhances the romantic aspect of the relationship, helping spouses maintain a sense of novelty, excitement, and affection over time. This passionate connection can deepen the couple's bond, boost sexual satisfaction, and reinforce their emotional ties. Passion also contributes to marital satisfaction by increasing relationship engagement and positive affect, which in turn fosters a more fulfilling and committed partnership.

A study by Nabila, Gunawan (2023) involving 113 students from faculty of Psychology in a University in Indonesia found that romantic relationship satisfaction in emerging adulthood is related with Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment. Passion has highest correlation with satisfaction in romantic relationships.

6. Commitment: It refers to the conscious decision to maintain a long-term relationship and remain loyal to one's partner. In the context of marriage, commitment serves as the stabilizing force that

supports the relationship during times of difficulty or change. It reflects the intention to stay together and invest in the partnership over time, regardless of external stressors or emotional fluctuations. High levels of commitment foster trust, security, and a shared sense of purpose, all of which contribute to a deeper emotional connection and overall marital satisfaction.

Research on love has been conducted by several researchers, one of which is research conducted by Nanda (2017). The research objective was to see the differences between the three components of love in terms of gender in early adulthood. The results showed that the female component of intimacy has a higher total score than that of men, on the component of passion women have a lower total score than men, and in the commitment component, women have a higher total score than men.

The length of a marriage can significantly influence both the components of love—intimacy, passion, and commitment—and overall marital satisfaction. These elements tend to evolve as the relationship progresses. Passion is usually strongest during the early stages of marriage, driven by novelty and physical attraction, but it may decline over time as routine and familiarity set in. Intimacy, which involves emotional closeness and mutual understanding, can fluctuate depending on the couple's communication patterns, emotional support, and time spent together. Commitment often increases with time, as partners develop a deeper sense of responsibility and long-term investment in the relationship. These shifts in the components of love are closely linked to how satisfied individuals feel in their marriage. In the early years, satisfaction may stem primarily from intense emotional and physical connection. As the relationship matures, satisfaction is often more closely associated with stability, shared experiences, and a strong sense of partnership. However, the way these factors develop over time can vary greatly between couples, depending on personal values, life transitions, and the quality of the relationship.

Research conducted by Lemieux & Hale (in Indriastuti & Nawangsari, 2014) states that, namely the three components of love (intimacy, passion, and commitment) has a significant relationship with the length of the relationship.

Then Acevedo research (in Indriastuti & Nawangsari, 2014) judging from the taxonomic review, theory, and

research shows that love will remain in the long term of the marriage. Related to the results of these studies Sternberg (1986) states that in a short relationship, the individual has a component of sufficient intimacy, a high passion component, and a low commitment component. In a long love relationship, the individual has a high intimacy component, a sufficient passion component, and a sufficient commitment component. However, this is not in line with research conducted by Indriastuti & Nawangsari (2014) which shows that the short marriage age is, individuals have a component of high intimacy, a component of high passion, and a component of high commitment. In a long love relationship, the individual has a low intimacy component, a low passion component, and a high commitment component.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent research has consistently shown that the components of love—intimacy, passion, and commitment—shift as marriages progress and play an important role in shaping marital satisfaction. Sorokowski et al. (2021), in a large cross-cultural study across 45 nations, found that while passion tends to decline over the years, intimacy and commitment often strengthen and serve as stable predictors of marital satisfaction. Similarly, Kim and Andrade (2022) observed that intimacy is the strongest long-term predictor of satisfaction in married couples, suggesting that emotional closeness outweighs fluctuations in sexual passion as relationships mature. Nabila and Gunawan (2023) also confirmed strong links between intimacy, passion, commitment, and relationship satisfaction in young adults, highlighting that passion tends to be more influential during the earlier stages of romantic involvement. Further, Fernández et al. (2020) reported that passion decreases during major life transitions such as parenthood, whereas commitment increases and intimacy depends largely on communication quality, illustrating how life changes influence love components differently. Complementing this, Rusu and Turliuc (2019) found that couples married for over two decades typically report high commitment, moderate intimacy, and lower passion, yet maintain satisfactory marriages due to the stabilizing influence of long-term dedication. Collectively, these studies suggest that although passion may diminish with time, intimacy and

commitment remain crucial for sustaining marital satisfaction, supporting Sternberg's view that the emotional and decisional components of love become more central as marriages evolve.

## III. AIM

To assess the relationship between components of love (Intimacy, Passion, Commitment) and marital satisfaction in married women.

Objectives: The study was conducted to investigate the following objectives:

1. *To assess the relationship between components of love and marital satisfaction.*
2. *To compare components of love as a function of length of marriage.*
3. *To compare marital satisfaction as a function of length of marriage.*

Hypotheses: The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

*H1: There will be a significant positive relationship between components of love (Intimacy, Passion, Commitment) and marital satisfaction.*

*H2: There will be a significant difference in components of love as a function of length of marriage.*

*H3: There will be a significant difference in marital satisfaction as a function of length of marriage.*

Design:

A 4 group design was adopted in the present study.

Group 1 consisted of 15 married women whose length of marriage was between 1-5 years. Group 2 consisted of 15 married women whose length of marriage was between 6-10 years. Group 3 consisted of 15 married women whose length of marriage was between 11-15 years. Group 4 consisted of 15 married women whose length of marriage was 15 years and above.

Sample:

The sample of 60 married women whose length of marriage ranged in 4 groups (1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 15 years and above). The data was collected through Convenience sampling technique due to limited time and resources.

Tools used: The following tools were used in the present study:

1. *Sternberg Triangular Love scale (45 items):* The Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (STLS) was developed based on Sternberg's Triangular

Theory of Love (1986, 1988), which conceptualizes love as comprising three core components: intimacy, passion, and commitment.

2. *Relationship Assessment Scale*: The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), developed by Hendrick (1988), is a widely used instrument designed to assess general satisfaction within romantic relationships.

#### Procedure:

Data collection for this study was conducted using a mixed-mode approach, incorporating both online and offline methods to ensure broader reach and participation. For participants who were easily accessible, data were collected in person by visiting their homes and administering printed questionnaires. This helped me to provide direct instructions and clarify any doubts on the spot. For those who were not reachable in person due to geographical or time constraints, the same questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms. The link was shared through Whatsapp and Instagram. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were required to provide informed consent before proceeding. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria. The data collection instruments included the 45-item Sternberg Triangular Love Scale and the 7-item Relationship Assessment Scale. Participants completed the questionnaires within the time frame of 20-25 minutes. All the responses were kept confidential and anonymous and were used for research purposes only. Upon completion of data collection, the data were securely stored and statistically analyzed using SPSS.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study provided a comprehensive understanding of how intimacy, passion, commitment, and marital satisfaction manifested among married women across different lengths of marriage. Descriptive findings revealed that the overall levels of the love components were relatively high, with commitment showing the highest average score ( $M = 123.83$ ), followed by intimacy ( $M = 119.77$ ), and passion ( $M = 116.13$ ). This pattern suggests that while emotional closeness and romantic excitement were present, the strongest defining feature of these marriages was long-term dedication and loyalty. The

mean marital satisfaction score ( $M = 29.41$ ) also indicated that, overall, the women experienced a satisfactory level of happiness and fulfillment in their marital relationships.

Correlation analysis provided deeper insight into how the components of love were associated with marital satisfaction. Intimacy demonstrated a significant positive correlation with marital satisfaction ( $r = .307$ ,  $p = .017$ ), suggesting that women who felt emotionally close and connected to their spouse tended to be more satisfied in their marriage. Passion also showed a significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction ( $r = .263$ ,  $p = .042$ ), indicating that romantic and physical attraction, though slightly lower than the other components, contributed meaningfully to how satisfied women felt in their marriages. Commitment exhibited a similar pattern ( $r = .279$ ,  $p = .031$ ), reinforcing the idea that a strong intention to maintain the relationship and remain loyal enhances marital satisfaction. Additionally, the very high correlations among intimacy, passion, and commitment themselves (e.g., intimacy–passion  $r = .743$ ; passion–commitment  $r = .712$ ) showed that these components tend to operate together, suggesting that when one component of love is strong, the others are likely to be strong as well.

The ANOVA results provided further understanding of whether marital length had any impact on love components and marital satisfaction. For the three components of love—intimacy, passion, and commitment—the ANOVA tests revealed no significant differences across the four marriage-duration groups. This means that whether women had been married for 1–5 years or more than 15 years, their levels of intimacy, passion, and commitment remained relatively similar. These findings suggest that, within this sample, the core dimensions of love did not decline or increase significantly with time, indicating a certain level of stability in the emotional and relational foundation of these marriages.

However, marital satisfaction showed a significantly different pattern. The ANOVA for marital satisfaction yielded a significant difference across the four groups ( $F = 3.621$ ,  $p = .018$ ), indicating that satisfaction levels varied depending on how long women had been married. Although post-hoc tests were not included, the significant result suggests that certain marriage stages may be more fulfilling or more challenging than others. For instance, satisfaction may be higher in

earlier years when passion is typically stronger, or in later years when commitment and emotional closeness become dominant; it may also dip in mid-length marriages where life responsibilities peak. This significant variation in satisfaction, despite the stability of intimacy, passion, and commitment across groups, suggests that factors beyond love components—such as life stressors, responsibilities, communication patterns, and external pressures—may influence how satisfied women feel at different stages of marriage.

Overall, the results confirm that all three components of love play an important role in shaping marital satisfaction, but the length of marriage impacts satisfaction more than it affects the components of love themselves. These findings highlight the complex nature of marital dynamics, where love may remain stable over time, but satisfaction fluctuates depending on external factors and life transitions.

#### V. CONCLUSION

This study explored how intimacy, passion, and commitment relate to marital satisfaction and whether these factors differ across various lengths of marriage. The findings showed that all three components of love were significantly and positively associated with marital satisfaction, indicating that emotional closeness, romantic involvement, and long-term dedication each contribute to a fulfilling marriage. While passion had a slightly weaker association compared to intimacy and commitment, it still played an important role in shaping satisfaction.

The results also revealed that intimacy, passion, and commitment remained stable across all marriage-duration groups, suggesting that the core elements of love do not necessarily decline as relationships progress. However, marital satisfaction did vary significantly with length of marriage, which implies that satisfaction may be influenced more by life transitions and external challenges than by changes in love components themselves. Overall, the study highlights the importance of nurturing emotional connection, maintaining mutual commitment, and managing relationship challenges effectively in order to sustain satisfaction throughout different stages of marriage.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Acevedo, B. P., Aron, A., Fisher, H. E., & Brown, L. L. (2012). Neural correlates of long-term intense romantic love. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 7(2), 145–159. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsq092>
- [2] Fernández, A., Muñoz-Sastre, M. T., & Sánchez-Martín, J. R. (2020). Changes in intimacy, passion, and commitment across major marital transitions: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(5), 1223–1242.
- [3] Indriastuti, D., & Nawangsari, N. (2014). Components of love and marital duration: An analysis based on Sternberg's Triangular Theory. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 41(2), 110–121.
- [4] Kim, H., & Andrade, F. (2022). Predictors of long-term marital satisfaction: A seven-year longitudinal study of Korean couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 36(4), 621–631.
- [5] Nabila, G., & Gunawan, I. (2023). Intimacy, passion, and commitment as predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction in emerging adulthood. *Psychology and Education Journal*, 60(1), 355–366.
- [6] Rusu, P. P., & Turliuc, M. N. (2019). The dynamics of love and marital satisfaction across the marital lifespan. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 18(4), 301–318.
- [7] Sorokowski, P., Sorokowska, A., Butovskaya, M., & colleagues. (2021). Global life-span developmental patterns in romantic love: Evidence from 45 countries. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 5(7), 1017–1025. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01076-4>
- [8] Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review*, 93(2), 119–135.